

A. OVERVIEW

It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) to provide quality and cost effective transportation to eligible DHR consumers for those vital services designed to enhance health, independence and self-sufficiency. This effort will be provided statewide through Coordinated Transportation systems that deliver quality service.

DHR includes the Division of Aging Services (DAS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD), and the Division of Public Health. Coordinated Transportation services are also provided to the Georgia Department of Labor's Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (DOL/VRS) and GoodWORKS Program.

Prior to Coordinated Transportation services, the divisions and various programs operated transportation independent of each other. This resulted in segregated services and duplication of transportation efforts. The Coordinated Transportation System began in fiscal year (FY) 1999 with the start-up of four DHR regions (Regions 1, 4, 5, and 10). As of FY 2003, transportation services are provided in all 159 counties. Under Coordinated Transportation, transportation services are designed, coordinated, and monitored through the Regional Transportation Office staff located in each DHR region. Coordinated Transportation allows for greater access to human services for the elderly, the disabled, and those with limited transportation options, while encouraging a more efficient method of mobility for our consumers. It eliminates duplicated transportation efforts and more effectively utilizes DHR's vehicle fleet.

Ongoing success of DHR Coordinated Transportation depends on the education and support of all stakeholders. From the Commissioner, to Division leadership, to the human service providers (HSP's), support of DHR Coordinated Transportation is paramount to achieving the overall goal of operating an efficient transportation system. It is essential that all divisions coordinate with the Transportation Services Section (TSS), not only within each participating division, but also across divisional lines. It is also essential that consistent information is shared and participation exists throughout the network. State and local committees have been formed to help achieve this effort.

1. Program Participation

DHR consumers and service providers have the option to choose alternatives to DHR Coordinated Transportation for passengers that are appropriate for combined ridership. It is important to note, however, that DHR resources used for such transportation are subject to redirection to this coordinated effort. Federal and state funds that have been allocated to local HSP's are combined (or 'pooled') in order to transport a greater number of individuals deemed eligible to receive such services.

2. DHR Transportation Network Structure

The DHR Coordinated Transportation System Advisory Group makes recommendations to the DHR Commissioner on improving the overall operation and efficiency of the system. The Advisory Group is comprised of individuals who have vested interests in the system, are system customers (internal or external), or are consumers of the DHR Coordinated Transportation System.

The Coordinated Transportation Program is administered through the DHR Office of Facilities and Support Services, Transportation Services Section (TSS). Responsibilities of the TSS include, but are not limited to: the development of policies that ensure quality services; technical assistance; establishment of a data system for program monitoring; an evaluation program for determining effectiveness; and development of statewide public relations plans. TSS uses the input of DHR Divisions and Offices in providing state level oversight.

Actual services are provided through contracted vendors in each region. Contractors may be a state entity, county, regional government entity or private for profit vendor. The TSS manages the transportation provider contracts and provides region and Department level leadership in this effort.

A Regional Transportation Coordinator (RTC) and an Administrative Operations Coordinator (AOC) are assigned to one or more DHR regions. Through its regional staff, the TSS extends its program management and oversight to the local level, and incorporates local input into the system design. The RTC, in concert with a Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC), is responsible for transportation planning.

3. Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee

The purpose of the RTCC is to provide local information, advice, direction, and support to the RTC. Members of the RTCC are responsible for keeping their respective networks informed. The RTC is responsible for educating the RTCC on Coordinated Transportation matters. At a minimum, a RTCC includes the following (or their designated representative) within each DHR region:

- Director of the Area Agency on Aging

- Division of Family and Children Services Field Coordinator
- District Public Health Director
- Regional Coordinator for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases
- Executive Director of the Regional Development Center
- Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board
- Public Transportation Coordinator from the Department of Transportation

If a member of the RTCC chooses to appoint other staff to represent his/her organization on the RTCC, the appointed representative is responsible for keeping the RTCC member informed.

The RTCC may add representation to the Committee beyond the minimum required membership. This may include representation of consumers, human service providers, and advisory groups on the RTCC.

Any member representing an organization that is directly involved in contracted operations of DHR Coordinated Transportation services demonstrates a conflict of interest and is subject to disqualification from serving on the RTCC as a voting member.

The Regional Transportation Office staff convenes, facilitates, and records meetings of the RTCC. Meetings are held at least bi-annually. Increased frequency, location, duration, and method of conducting meetings are determined by the membership.

RTCC's may establish advisory level committees for the purpose of providing advice and opinions on transportation issues. The Advisory committees may meet routinely to discuss implementation and operational concerns and report concerns to the RTCC. The transportation contractor(s) at the discretion of the advisory committee may be expected to attend advisory committee meetings to provide input and updates.